(b) whether it is apprehended that the safety and security of Tamil Nadu would be affected by the free flow of LTTE by this project; and

(c) the safeguards and devices envisaged to avert such threats?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRl T.R. BAALU): (a) There is no general protest against the project.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Financing of Sethusamudram Project

2344. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the sources of finance for Sethusamudram Project;

(b) by when the project would be taken up and completed; and

(c) what are the major benefits of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRl T.R. BAALU): (a) The sources of finance for the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project are yet to be approved by the Com petent Authority.

(b) The project is likely to be completed within 3 years after obtaining all necessary clearances and approvals.

(c) The major benefits expected from the Project are as under:-

(i) It will provide a continuous navigable route around the Indian peninsula running within her own territorial waters.

(ii) Ship sailing from East to West Coast of India will save sailing time of 21-36 hours and distance of 254-424 nautical miles.

(iii) Coastal movement of domestic cargo will improve.

(iv) This project will lead to considerable savings **and** earnings of foreign exchange.

(v) This channel will become an invaluable asset from national defence and security point of view enabling easier and quicker access between the coasts.

(vi) The project is expected to facilitate establishment of a transshipment hub for container traffic in the Southern Peninsula, directly benefiting the export and import trade and saving foreign exchange.

Transport capacity in upper Ganges canal

†2345. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether water transport capacity exists in upper Ganges canal in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, whether there is any scheme to utilise it after making assessment of this capacity?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No study has been conducted as yet by Inland Waterways Authority of India to assess water transport capacity in upper Ganges canal in Uttar Pradesh.

(b) Does not arise.

Features of National Road Safety Policy

2346. SHRI DATTAMEGHE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the National Road Safety Policy drafted in 1992 and endorsed by the National Road Safety Council in December, 1994;

(b) when was the National Road Safety Policy notified;

(c) whether the provisions of the Policy are being implemented fully;

(d) if not, the reaction of Government thereto in view of rising trend in road accidents; and

(e) whether it is now proposed to review this Policy to make it more practical and effective?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.